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William Hamilton Osborne

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Albert W. Tolman

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Morgan Shepard

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Don Mark Lemon

The Sale of Shakespeare's Ghost
Don Mark Lemon

The Tax on Moustaches
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Catechisms

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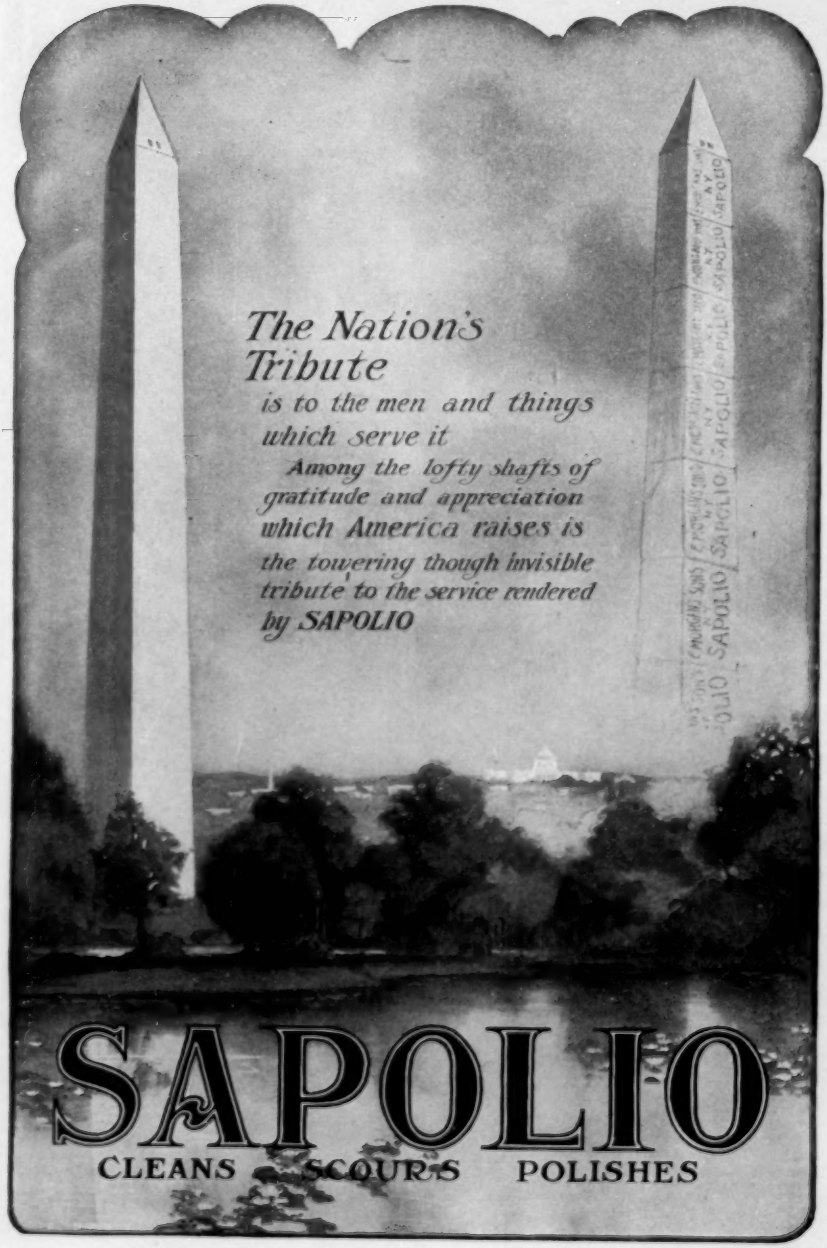
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The Game at Goulet's.*

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE.

THE individual of distinguished bearing who had, for a short space of time, been standing in front of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, was none other than Mr. Barnabas Billington, of New York. He was engaged, apparently, in contemplating life. Outwardly he was imperturbable and calm. But there was internecine turbulence within.

"My insides," commented Mr. Barnabas Billington to himself, as he flicked a bit of dust from the lapel of his frock coat, "my insides are clamoring insistently for sustenance."

Mr. Billington was hungry — disgracefully and outrageously hungry. The world, which owed Mr. Billington a living, had incontinently slipped a cog somewhere — had unwarrantably interrupted the habits of a lifetime. For it had been Mr. Billington's regular custom to break his fast each day at eight o'clock, to lunch wisely but not too well at one, and to dine well but not too wisely, at the hour of six. None of these things had he done for the full space of thirty hours, and he was well-nigh famished. His constitution — a robust one — cried out against the unconstitu-

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tionality of the omission. But Mr. Barnabas Billington gave no sign. He held his head as high as ever. So far as his outward appearance was concerned he might have been the President of the United States, the Czar of all the Russias — the Mikado of Japan.

He flicked the unoffending curbstone with his bamboo cane. A policeman sauntered past and Mr. Billington recognized his presence with a bow.

"A fine class of men," thought he to himself, "and so well fed," he added bitterly. Even as he meditated upon this, Mr. Billington felt a no-uncertain grip upon his arm. He swung hastily about, with his heart in his throat, for he feared that the grip was the grip of the officer who had just gone by — the grip of the insatiate Law. But he was mistaken — the fact was otherwise. The man who faced him was a man of medium size — a gray sort of a man — middle-aged, modest in appearance, clothed in unostentatious garments. The name of this man was Wylie Warwick, late of Chicago, now of the Borough of Manhattan, N. Y.

Barnabas Billington breathed a sigh of relief. "By George," he exclaimed, "I'm glad it's you instead of——" He paused. "I'm glad it's you, anyway," he went on, "You're the very man I wanted, most, to meet. I'm starved to death. I want some of your money and want it mighty quick. What do you say to that?"

Wylie Warwick, Esquire, had naught to say about it. Without an instant's hesitation he thrust his hand into his inside coat pocket and produced a wallet. He opened this wallet and took therefrom a goodly packet of bills and banknotes of all denominations.

"How much?" he asked, uncertainly.

But Billington, his eye upon the packet, slowly shook his head. "Not that kind," he protested, "what I want is something real, you see."

Mr. Warwick sighed and returned the packet to the wallet; the wallet to his coat.

"I'm disappointed," he suggested, sadly, "for I was sure that you were going to shove some of 'em along for me." He sighed

again. "Though I will confess," he added, "that it's more than I dare to do just now, myself. This town, Billington, is saturated with my money from the Battery to the Borough of the Bronx. I had to stop for fear of precipitation."

"Not precipitation," delicately insinuated Mr. Billington, with a smile, "incarceration — that's the word."

These two gentlemen, Messrs. Billington and Warwick, had known each other for the space of some six months. Each was a man with a specialty. They had met under circumstances which were peculiar — perhaps unique. Mr. Barnabas Billington's specialty consisted in the sale of New York properties which did not exist. He sold to any who would buy. His deeds he carefully prepared and signed himself, and frequently he backed them up by title policies of his own title company — a company which, like the lots, had no material existence.

The specialty of Mr. Wylie Warwick, in its way, was quite as meritorious, for it consisted in paying for everything in bills of large denomination — and getting back the change. Getting back the change was the important feature to Mr. Warwick. For the bills, though of a brand which Mr. Warwick could personally guarantee, did not compare with those turned out by Mr. Warwick's money-making rival, the government of the United States.

Six months before, Mr. Billington had sold a Harlem lot to Mr. Warwick for the sum of twenty-one hundred dollars; and Mr. Warwick had offered three one-thousand-dollar bills in payment and had asked for the inevitable change. And, in that instant, each had recognized the other's genius, had shaken hands, and *from* that instant had become fast friends. So far, neither had regretted the acquaintance.

But the time had come when, for a while at least, the public had lost interest in the wares of both these gentlemen; while the police department, taking up the thread where the public dropped it, had manifested an interest in their doings which was unpleasant and embarrassing to each. So far, however, the police department had failed to make the acquaintance of either Mr. Billington or Mr. Warwick. So far, therefore, thought the two, so good.

For a third time Mr. Warwick sighed. "I have plenty of the queer," he continued, "plenty of it. But I've only got a half a dollar of the kind you're looking for. That, or a goodly portion of it, to say the least, is at your service, sir; though by Jove, I'm way down to hard pan myself, I am."

He stopped for an instant and looked Mr. Billington over from the crown of his high silk hat to the soles of his unsullied patent leather shoes.

"Why in thunder," he exclaimed, as he compared the elegance of Mr. Billington's apparel, with the sombre and somewhat wrinkled effect of his own attire, "why in thunder, if you're so hard up, don't you go and pawn some of your good clothes — why not?"

Mr. Billington, to do him justice — blushed. "What," he returned, holding up his hands in holy horror, "and go naked? Never."

"But no," he went on, solemnly, "my clothes are all my capital — my stock is trade. In my case, clothes, indeed, do make the man. Who steals my name, steals trash ——."

"Amen," echoed Warwick, with a significant smile.

"But he," continued Billington, impressively, "who filches from me my good clothes, robs me of that which cannot possibly fit him, and makes me poor indeed. And besides," he added, unbuttoning his frock coat, "you are able to see for yourself, that, in a measure, I have already anticipated your advice." His waistcoat and his inevitable shirt-front diamond stud, were gone.

Warwick swung slowly on his heel. "I'm hungry, too," he remarked, getting back to the starting point, "blamed hungry. But what of it? I guess two of us can dine on fifty cents."

Billington, whose tastes were more advanced, energetically shook his head. "One can't *dine* on fifty cents," he answered, "one might nibble on that sum — but *two* can barely *smell*. Still, when you come right down to it, I suppose it's an improvement on a vacuum." He placed his hand upon the region of his stomach.

Warwick looked troubled. "If I dared," he began, "I'd shove some more of this queer; but as it is, I guess I'd better

not. I think, Billington, we'll have, instead, a Wylie Warwick dinner."

"A Wylie Warwick," queried Billington uncertainly, "what now, might a Wylie Warwick dinner be?"

"A Wylie Warwick," returned that gentleman, "is a dinner that you can always get in any restaurant where you are permitted to pay your check yourself, at the cashier's desk. If that privilege be granted to you rather than to the waiter, then you can have a four-dollar dinner for the small sum of forty cents. And that, sir, is a Wylie Warwick."

Mr. Billington clapped him on the back. "If ever an invention," exclaimed Billington, "was superior to its inventor—this is it. By all means let us have a Wylie Warwick."

Warwick pulled out his watch. "It's just twelve," he announced, "early, but all the better. Come. We'll go to Bamberger's Cosmopolitan on Sixth Avenue. That's a likely kind of place."

It *was* a likely kind of place—is, yet; a good place to get a good substantial meal—thick, juicy, tender cuts of beef, large, mealy potatoes with their jackets on, and all that sort of thing. It catered to the middle class, and the middle class returned the compliment. Mr. Billington's mouth watered at the mere sight of it; he thought eagerly, of the tasty meal he would enjoy.

At the corner Wylie Warwick pulled him by the sleeve. "Just a minute," he commanded, "until I acquaint you with the *de*-tails of the thing." For some three minutes they held their heads together. Finally, however, Mr. Warwick drew away.

"You understand?" asked Warwick.

"I understand," assented Billington. Without another word the two separated, and Mr. Wylie Warwick disappeared. Mr. Billington strolled toward the restaurant after the fashion of a man who has nothing better to do, and sauntered in.

There were but few unoccupied tables. Billington selected one of these, far down toward the rear. He drew off his gloves, hung up his hat and cane, sat down and started in to give his order. It is due to him to say that he ordered almost everything in sight. The waitress brought it to him.

For ten minutes he did not allow himself even a breathing

space. At the end of that time he drew a sharp breath inward, and chuckled — positively chuckled — with delight.

"If this," he remarked softly to himself, "is a Wylie Warwick, a Wylie Warwick is a good thing, and no mistake."

When he had nearly finished a man entered and seated himself just opposite to Billington. Billington glared at him with the air of one who was indignant that such a shabby genteel specimen should choose that particular table. The man who faced him was a medium-sized man of middle age; rather gray in appearance, his clothes a bit seedy and unkempt. The order which this man gave to the waitress was quite in keeping with his appearance.

"Coffee and ham sandwich," he directed, "milk on the side."

The girl brought it. The medium-sized, gray man, ate and drank with a relish, but slowly, nevertheless, as one who would make it last as long as possible.

Mr. Billington finished his roast beef and drank his bottled ale, and smiled, and thanked his stars that his meal was not as the meal of his vis-à-vis. In due time the waitress brought Mr. Billington his check. She had already laid upon the table the check of the small, gray man — his check was for ten cents. Mr. Billington's was for $3.65.

It was just at this juncture that Mr. Billington became cautiously active. At a time when no one was looking, he leaned over and seized the ten-cent check of the small, gray man, and deposited his own large check, face downward, in its place. Then he rose, drew on his gloves, seized his cane, donned his silk hat and sauntered down the aisle.

The cashier's desk was in a little alcove. This alcove he entered, and passed to the cashier a ten-cent check and a ten-cent piece. This ten-cent piece he had borrowed of Mr. Wylie Warwick some time before. The cashier, after her usual wont, smiled upon him; — he smiled genially upon her. Then he strode in a dignified manner through the doorway and into the street beyond. Once in the street, he turned the first corner that he came to — and disappeared.

The shabby, genteel man, who had been left at the table slowly finished his ham sandwich, finished his coffee, brushed

away the crumbs, seized his hat, and then picked up his check.

"Jehoshaphat," he audibly exclaimed, "what in thunder's this?" He called the waitress. "Look here, girl," he went on, "you've given me a check for three dollars and sixty-five cents when all I had was coffee and a sandwich. Look at the check you gave me. Look."

The girl looked at the check. Then she looked at the shabby-genteel man; then at the plate and cup and saucer on which had reposed the abbreviated meal that he had eaten. Then she gasped.

"That great, big, stylish stiff," she exclaimed hysterically, "has done us up for fair." She hastened to the cashier's desk and explained the situation; the cashier became excited; the head waiter became still more excited; he rushed back to the table. The shabby-genteel man explained the situation on his part, and volubly protested. One or two men ran into the street to apprehend the delinquent Mr. Billington, but with small success. The head waiter frowned.

"Well, anyways," he remarked to the waitress, "this gentleman has a right to have a check for only ten cents. You've got a right to give it to him. *He's* all right, at least."

The shabby-genteel man obtained a ten-cent check, buttoned up his coat, adjusted his slouch hat more firmly on his head; paid the cashier his ten cents, and left. It was all over and Bamberger's Cosmopolitan had been done to the tune of three dollars more or less, according to Bamberger's profit on a good square meal.

The shabby-genteel man also turned the first corner, steamed rapidly up one block and down another, glanced over his shoulder now and then to see that he was not followed — and finally, as though by accident, brought up before a well-dressed man, wearing a high silk hat. He plucked the well-dressed man by the sleeve.

"Well," said he, with a grin, "how did you enjoy your dinner, Mr. Billington?" Billington smiled the smile of a man at peace with all the world. He placed one hand upon his stomach.

"It was the best ten-cent meal," he remarked, still smiling, "that I ever had." He paused. "But," he continued, soli-

citously, "now, where do you come in?"

Mr. Wylie Warwick — for it was he — nodded. "I come in all right," he answered, "at the next place."

He looked doubtfully at Billington. "Perhaps," he went on, "if I'm going to order a big meal on a bluff, perhaps I ought to look the part. I ought to be togged out. At least that's about the way it seems to me."

Mr. Billington understood. "Don't say a word," he commanded, "but follow me." He led the way down a narrow alley, doffed his hat and coat and handed them to Warwick. The exchange was soon effected. Two minutes later Mr. Warwick emerged from the alley, looking quite as distinguished in his way as Mr. Billington had looked before. Mr. Billington, however, now looked shabbier, if anything, than Mr. Warwick had.

"Where now?" inquired Billington.

"Now," answered Warwick, "we'll go up to Mike Gooley's on the Circle."

"Mike Gooley's," mused Billington, "never heard of it."

"Never heard of it?" echoed Warwick, in a tone which implied that he who knew not Mike Gooley's must indeed argue himself unknown.

"Mike Gooley," repeated Billington, intending to be somewhat facetious, "I'll wager he's a Frenchman, by his name."

Unconsciously he spoke the truth. Mike Gooley *was* a Frenchman. Not those who heard his name came to that conclusion — but those who saw it written, or heard it spelt. And Mr. Warwick now brought Mr. Billington to a realization of this state of affairs, for he pointed to a sign across the way. And this sign read:

THE MANHATTAN BURROW. MICHELE GOULET, PROP.

The Manhattan Burrow of Michele Goulet's was an exaggerated edition of Old Tom's in Thames Street — now extinct, but once the delight of all the Wall Street crowd. Old Tom's had been, however, small and dingy. The Burrow was spacious in an unusual degree; but it had the same old mahogany tables, the same unwieldy loaves of bread, the same sawdust on the floor. It was very noisy, very free and easy, very European, very English, very American — and very expensive. Everybody knew this

place — everybody but Billington, perhaps. And everybody who could afford it, liked it. And it was whispered about town continually, that you could get anything of any kind to eat or drink at any time of day or night or month or year, at Michele Goulet's.

Goulet himself was always much in evidence — a large man with a black beard, and sleepy eyes; seated at the cashier's desk; a slow-moving humorous body, but with a word on his tongue for this customer and for that.

Mr. Wylie Warwick entered Michele Goulet's, he and the high hat, the frock coat, the kid gloves and the cane. Goulet, uncertain as to which of the New York millionaires the new comer might be, smiled genially and nodded.

Mr. Billington with his slouch hat and dingy coat, basked for a while, in the sunshine on another block.

Goulet's place was crowded fairly well. But Warwick found a favorable nook in which to sit and eat. A waiter approached him with a bland smile and a printed bill of fare.

"Anything special today?" inquired Warwick. The waiter smiled again, still more blandly, and produced a small bill of fare written in pen and ink.

"Monsieur," said the waiter, "we have everything — today."

Mr. Warwick glanced over the written sheet of paper and his soul rejoiced.

"This is something like," he told himself, "something like indeed." He checked some half dozen dishes with his pencil.

"After the soup and the fish, waiter," he announced, "suppose you bring me some quail on toast ——"

"Ah," smiled the waiter, "vegetables?"

"I'll tell you about the vegetables later," went on Warwick, "bring me quail on toast," he repeated, "and I guess I'll have some grouse, too, at the same time."

"Vegetables?" again inquired the waiter.

"And on top of that," continued Warwick, "a fine cut of venison — and wine jelly, and ——"

"Vegetables," insisted the waiter, "they are fine, very fine, today."

"Vegetables," repeated Warwick, "all right — all right. Asparagus tips, green peas, new potatoes — anything, everything.

And some Pommery. And some coffee to top off with. See? And bring 'em right away."

The waiter was annoyed by the advent of a well-built man of somewhat shabby appearance, who insisted upon seating himself at Warwick's table. The waiter protested. His protest had no effect whatever on the shabby man, who, without more ado, sat down facing Mr. Warwick.

One by one the waiter brought the dainties. Warwick smiled. The man on the other side drew down the corners of his mouth. He stared across the room, but, shading his mouth with his right hand, addressed himself to Warwick. "I see," he remarked, sotto voce, "that the man who eats last eats best — under the Wylie Warwick system." Wylie Warwick did not deign to answer. He plunged voraciously into the delicacies set before him.

"If there's anything I like," he whispered, half to himself, "it's game when it's good and high. And this is out of sight. It's so blamed high that it almost falls to pieces. Gooley, I'm telling you, is simply great — Gooley and his game."

His vis-à-vis slowly drank a cup of tea and licked his chops. "If I'd 'a' known this," he complained to himself, "I would have waited."

Some twenty minutes after this Mr. Wylie Warwick stood in front of the cashier's desk.

"Nice day, Mr. Gooley," he remarked, throwing down a check for fifteen cents and with it, the necessary coin. He drew on his gloves and started off. But Goulet detained him. Goulet looked at the fifteen-cent check, front and back and upside down, and smiled a sleepy smile.

"This check," he said pointedly, "is for eight dollars and thirty-five cents, monsieur."

Warwick pointed to the check. "Fifteen cents," he answered, calling attention to the unmistakable figures upon it.

"Eight-thirty-five," protested Goulet, shrugging his shoulders. He looked Mr. Warwick squarely in the eyes; and it was the look of a man who is sleepy only for a purpose. Mr. Warwick slightly shivered. For he knew, then, that he was caught. He knew that Goulet must have heard of this same trick before.

"Eight dollars, thirty-five cents," murmured Goulet, still politely. Warwick was far from being nonplussed; the incident involved a change of tactics, that was all.

"You jay," he thought to himself, "I'll stick you worse than if you took the fifteen cents." It was his purpose to hand over to Goulet one of his special brand of twenty-dollar bills, and get the change. He smiled.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said to Goulet, "you are right, and I am wrong. My eyesight is not good, you see."

"Your digestion, doubtless, is very good, though," answered Monsieur Goulet.

"The check *is* for $8.35," went on Warwick, "I had not noticed that before." He thrust his hand into his breast pocket and produced a wallet. Then he gasped. The wallet contained no bills — it contained merely a few forged deeds for the title of vacant lots which did not exist. He then recalled the fact that he was wearing, not his own coat, but Mr. Billington's. He blushed.

"Ah, just charge that up to my account, will you," he said, with studied carelessness, to Goulet, "Mr. Matthew Bidwell, 56 West 43rd. I'll send the cash around this afternoon. Or," he added, "would you prefer a check?"

Goulet shrugged his shoulders. At the same time he pressed a small button on his desk. "We never charge," he explained, in his blandest manner, "and we never take a check. Never. You must pay. You really must, you know."

Another man than Warwick would have surrendered. But not Wylie Warwick. "I've got something up my sleeve for you yet, old fellow, he thought to himself, "the biggest card of all. From his trousers pocket he pulled out an abbreviated almanac. "Mr. Gooley," he remarked, "I have had a superb dinner. I admit it — "

At this juncture he was interrupted by the entrance of two husky-looking individuals whom he recognized at once as plain clothes men from the Tenderloin precinct. Their entrance did not feaze him in the least.

"Mr. Gooley," he went on, "may I see you in your private room — just for a moment?"

"You may," answered Goulet. They stepped into the small office and Warwick closed the door. "I don't want these chaps to hear what I say — and you may not desire it either." He jerked his head in the direction of the plain clothes men outside.

"The first question, Mr. Gooley," he continued, "is, are you fond of dates?"

"I dote," replied Goulet, "on dates."

Warwick coughed. "Here are a few," he said, "let me read them to you. Listen." He consulted his abbreviated almanac. "October first to December thirty-first, inclusive. How is that?" he asked.

"Sublime," answered Goulet, "beautiful dates, to be sure."

Warwick kept on. "September sixteenth to December thirty-first, inclusive. And again, September first to November twenty-ninth, inclusive. Now, Mr. Gooley, did you ever hear of these same dates before?"

"I — I don't know," faltered Goulet, "perhaps. Perhaps I have."

"The first period," continued Warwick, "is the only period during which quail may be lawfully possessed within the confines of the state of New York; the second is the period for partridges; the third is the period for venison.

"Well," said Goulet, imperturbably.

"Well," resumed Warwick, "I have this day enjoyed at your expense ——" Goulet interrupted him.

"At *yours*," protested Goulet. Warwick ignored the interruption. "I have this day enjoyed upon your premises a meal composed of venison, of partridge and of quail — you understand?"

"Well?" remarked Goulet, still unmoved.

"Well," thundered Wylie Warwick, "today happens to be the seventh day of May — that's all."

"Well?" still remarked Goulet.

"All right," said Warwick, again consulting his book, "the penalty is this: $60 for each variety, $25 apiece for the partridge and the quail, $100 for the venison — to say nothing of the mass of stuff that is in your larder at this instant. Three hundred and thirty dollars, at the very least, for what I had."

"That," inquired Goulet "is the penalty?"

"That's the penalty," answered Warwick, "and one-half goes to the state of New York. You owe the other half to me."

"As the informer?" inquired Goulet.

"Exactly," inquired Warwick, drily, "as the informer. True."

"I see," remarked Goulet, "one-half of $330 to Informer Mr. Matthew Bidwell of 56 West 43rd. I see."

Then Goulet's manner underwent a change. "You have said," he added, "that this is the seventh day of May. May I call your distinguished attention to the fact that this is also — Thursday?"

"You may," answered Warwick, "for it is."

"Come with me," commanded Goulet. He opened the door leading out into the restaurant. He pointed to a small sign opposite the cashier's desk, one that Warwick had, unfortunately, overlooked. That sign read like this:—

THURSDAY IS OUR PHYSICAL CULTURE DAY. M. GOULET, PROP.

"Those quails, those partridges, those venisons," thundered Goulet, "all those that you ate, and many more — all, all made of nuts — such nuts; and spices — such spices; and sauces, oh, such sauces. All — all. All of vegetable — all on our vegetarian physical culture day — all on every Thursday. Ah! The check," he added, to recur to a familiar subject, "the check is just eight dollars and thirty-five cents, my friend."

Wylie Warwick wilted. Two minutes later Goulet, once more with a sleepy smile, turned to the new tenderloin police.

"Messieurs," he remarked, "kindly escort this gentleman," with a gesture toward Warwick, "and this other gentleman, coming now toward us," indicating Mr. Barnabus Billington, "around to your station house. I shall come later to complain against them. I have seen such games before."

Messrs. Warwick and Billington trapped at their own game, went perforce, with the new Tenderloin police. There was nothing else to do. They had sowed the wind — they were reaping the whirlwind.

At the new Tenderloin, of course, they were carefully searched. The search developed nothing — that is, nothing much. Except,

of course, a batch of clever counterfeits found on Mr. Billington, who was quite innocent of them — and a batch of clever forgeries, found on Mr. Warwick, who was quite innocent of *them*.

When Goulet came around, the sergeant seized him by the hand.

"Mr. Gooley," he commented, "we must congratulate you — you are great." He pointed to the two delinquents. "You've rounded up for us some of the biggest game there is in the city of New York — that's what."

Goulet bore his blushing honors well. He smiled sardonically, but sleepily, into the face of Mr. Wylie Warwick.

"Big Game," murmured Michele Goulet, "is this the open season for big game? For this is only Thursday, the seventh day of May." He laughed and drolly shook his head.

The sergeant smiled upon him. "All the year around," the sergeant answered, "the season's open for such big game — as *them*."

The Head of Datto Kaim.*

BY ALBERT W. TOLMAN.

THROUGH turbulent Mindanao, from Surigao's shark-infested straits to volcanic Butulan frowning over the Sea of Celebes, the Americans in garrison talked of the unconquered brigand, Datto Kaim. Bullets and bolo-slashes, generously dispensed in lightning raid and treacherous ambush, had taught them well his prowess as a dealer in the merchandise of war. Secret and deadly as a midnight serpent, he left a trail through the jungle as easy to follow as yesterday's proa-track in the surrounding sea. Of his face and figure no white man could speak certainly, for the lips of the dead are sealed — yet many and various were the traits that were ascribed to him by his foes.

"He is tall and supple, with slender hands and feet, an Arab of the Arabs, handsome as Apollo and brave as a lion," said a young lieutenant, with conviction.

"Short and squat, black as burnt coffee, hideous as a nightmare, cruel and cowardly," was the dictum of a grizzled captain.

Still a third painted a different picture. The Moros themselves knew, but said nothing, deeming silence healthier than speech.

Wearied at last by frequent tidings of Datto Kaim's evil deeds, the authorities at Manila determined that the brigand must be taken. "Alive or dead" ran the decree; and, as he had been a very cruel man, a price was set upon his head, with exemption and full pardon for any rebel who should bring it in.

Then began a hunt with Krag and Mauser through swamp and jungle and canebrake, over hill and valley, until finally the quarry came to bay in the wooded hollow of an old crater.

Deep in a bosque of tall cogon-grass lurked Datto Kaim. From his lair four scouts stole out by different trails to spy what way

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of escape lay open. The first panted back from the north with cheek redly bullet-scored.

"The Americano pigs hold the path," said he.

By the route that led to the sea the second slunk in.

"There also are the sons of the Devil," was his report.

Quoth the third, fresh from the southern pass:

"They have a strange gun that talks faster than an angry woman."

The fourth scout did not come back at all. Then indeed the Datto knew that the game was near its close. He sat silent in the gloomy circle, hand toying with bolo-handle. His keen glance read the sullen faces, ere he spoke:

"'Tis the end of the hunt. A price is on my head. Does any one want it?"

All swore by Mohammed that they did not. But one man lied; and the Datto knew it. He arose, and the rest rose likewise.

"We must scatter, each for himself. Let none follow me; that path is safe for me alone."

Into the jungle they glided stealthily, a single man on every trail but one; and on that were two, far apart. But the first knew that the second was following.

Datto Kaim scaled a crag, and looked out through its screen of vines over the sun-kissed breeze-swept tree-tops. It was a pleasant world to live in. He had no desire to tread just yet the razor-edge of Sirat that bridges the believer over the pit of hell. To avoid it he would try a last resource. Again he sank into the foliaged gloom.

That afternoon in a forest glen two contestants debated with bolos in quick-breathing silence. The issue was a question of heads; and the champion who argued more incisively passed out of the glade with two, one on his shoulders, the other in a bloody bag.

At sunset from the jungle-edge a white rag on a stick waved truce to the American camp, and a brown man crept out with a grisly burden. To the sentries he said:

"Take me to your chief. I bring the head of Datto Kaim."

They led him in. Of the captain he exacted a solemn pledge:

"Swear to me on the Book of your Prophet that I, Soliman

al-Melik, bearer of the head of Datto Kaim, shall go free and unharmed. I swear by the Black Stone of the Kaaba to be loyal to the United States."

The captain pledged him full pardon and safety.

"Now open the bag," said he; and the troopers, grouped around, stood at gaze with wide eyes and parted lips.

Out rolled a bloody head. They stared on it, fascinated, curious; for never before had white man seen the face of Datto Kaim and lived.

The captain broke the silence:

"Is this the head of Datto Kaim?"

"No, but of his servant, a traitor who would have betrayed him."

"Where then is his head?" came the stern inquiry.

The brown man placed his hands upon his brow, and salaamed low.

"Behold, on the shoulders of Soliman al-Melik, loyal to the United States and protected by thine oath—the head of Datto Kaim."

A Question in Ethics.*

BY ANNA MILES OLCOTT.

MALTBY pushed the pile of new crisp bills over the small glass square, and watched his customer count them. They meant so little, those ten hundred-dollar bills, to the man who had just received them, and they would have meant so much to Maltby. The customer departed, cheerfully pompous. The Teller turned to his books and began to enter a package of checks.

All day he had paid out gold and silver and bills until he was weary with the sight of them. Yet, strange paradox, at the present moment they were the things he most coveted.

By what subtle power did some men accumulate wealth so easily. Everything Dan Beardsley touched turned to gold, though Beardsley was always considered rather slow at school. Dan might give him a little of that money without missing it, but, no, those rich men piled up their dollars without care whence they came or what good they might do to others. To part with them was like losing heart's blood. When a man gave money away now-a-days he took good care the newspapers knew all about it. There was not much the right hand did that the left hand didn't spy out. Maltby had will, courage, brains,—yes, brains,—and he had never seen an opportunity in his life to make money. But if sheer force of will meant anything he would get it yet.

Suddenly he paused, with the last two checks in his hand, and began absently to make straight black marks on the blotter. Then, giving himself a jerk, he entered the checks, closed the book and, reaching for his hat, walked moodily out into the street.

He hailed a newsboy, bought an evening *Herald* and ran

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his eye rapidly down the columns of advertisements. Evidently he failed to find what he sought, for, with an impatient gesture, he tossed the paper into a doorway. Upon reaching Broadway, he took a small card from his vest pocket, glanced at it, then swung himself on to a Lexington Avenue car.

At Fifty-first Street he got off, walked back a half block, and halted in front of a common-place brown stone house. Taking the card from his pocket again, he compared the number on it with the number on the house. This was without doubt the place, yet there was no sign on the door. The curtains were pulled down and the outer door closed as though the owners were not at home. Nevertheless, he had reason to suspect that he might gain admittance. A certain grim determination settled about the corners of his thin lips, as he slowly mounted the steps and pulled the bell vigorously three times. Almost immediately he heard the creaking of hinges. A moment later he disappeared into the house, and the heavy oaken door fell to behind him with a dull thud.

One hour, two, three went by. The afternoon waned into the twilight and the twilight yielded to chilly, starless night. The shivering flames of the street lamps flared fitfully in the gathering mist. Passers-by grew less frequent, until only occasionally the footsteps of a belated wayfarer tapped lonelily along the damp flagstones. One by one lights shone from the windows of the stolid brown phalanx on either side, shone save from the house with its green curtains pulled down and its outer-door close shut.

Nine o'clock had come and gone full thirty minutes when that door opened just wide enough to permit Maltby to squeeze through, then closed again instantly as though in fear that he might wish to re-enter.

The young man took off his hat and drank in a deep breath of the cool wet air, before he ran down the steps. Then, without a backward glance, he walked rapidly down the Avenue.

He had forgotten that he had not tasted a morsel since noon, he had even forgotten the woman whom he loved and who was expecting him at that moment. He was bent upon one thing, and one thing alone.

The next morning found Maltby the Teller at his post, a trifle pale and drawn about the eyes, but counting out the crisp green notes with the same unerring rapidity. How different they appeared to him today. Yesterday he had envied their possessors, today he regarded them with the certainty that many of them would soon be his. Already he reveled in the lust of possession.

During the luncheon hour he mailed a note to the woman who had awaited him in vain the night before. He told her that business of the utmost importance would keep him away from her for the next month, but that every day of his enforced absence she must remember he was working for her. As he dropped the letter into the mail box, a sense of power thrilled through all his limbs. When he saw her again he would be his own master and—theirs.

Never had the Teller worked with such swiftness, such infallible determination. Other men, despairing over unbalanceable balance sheets, day after day with astonishment saw him depart at the earliest hour and knew that he never left with one penny unaccounted for. Could they have seen how he spent the rest of the day their astonishment might have merged into suspicion.

On the way home he always stopped at a certain quiet restaurant and drank a glass of milk. Then he hurried directly to his room, closed and locked the door, and did not open it again until the next morning. Each day the same routine was repeated with the regularity of clockwork.

On Tuesday, the tenth of April, counted hereafter a memorable day in his life, a messenger boy brought five thousand dollars in cash from Dan Beardsley and a confidential tip in regard to the stock market.

That evening Maltby broke the accustomed routine and went to see Grace Clayborne. Two months later they were married, and Maltby considered himself the happiest man in the city of New York.

His investments, he told his wife, had proved successful beyond his most sanguine expectations. At the bank he turned his books over for inspection and resigned his position. Men

began to look upon him as a rich man, but had one of them been asked the nature of Maltby's business he could not have answered for the life of him.

Occasionally Maltby was seen in Wall Street, but he was neither a broker nor a speculator. If he bought stock, it was generally sure to rise and net him a comfortable sum. He rarely made use of the stock market, however, but when he did it was in a purely legitimate way.

He bought a house up town and with especial care furnished an up-stairs room for his private study. This room was cut off from the rest of the house by a narrow hallway, to insure perfect quiet, Maltby explained. But his wife hated the room. She felt it was the one place in the house in which she was not welcome. It engulfed Maltby like the tomb and held him bound, sometimes all night, sometimes for hours during the day.

Once, soon after their marriage, his wife had ventured to knock on the door, and, growing alarmed at receiving no response, had attempted to open it. Suddenly it flew back, and Maltby, trembling visibly and deadly pale, stared at her with haggard eyes.

"You have cost me ten thousand dollars," he muttered hoarsely, and pushing roughly past her, seized his hat and rushed from the house.

After that a tiny brass clock on his writing table clicked sharply whenever the hall door was opened and recorded each click on a hidden slip of paper.

Maltby apologized to his wife for his conduct. The explanation he offered was hardly so plausible as might have been expected, but she accepted it without apparent suspicion. He said he had been thinking deeply upon a most important and intricate business matter, and that her interruption came just at the wrong moment. Then he kissed her, promised never to say another cross word to her, and, with manlike superiority, thought the subject closed forever.

She did not tell him that after he left the house, she crept to her room, weak with indignation and fear, and gave way to a passionate burst of tears. She simply accepted the apology in the spirit with which it was offered, and strove bravely to

believe every word the man uttered. He loved her. She was sure of that. But instinct warned her that there was a part of his life in which she had no share. From that day the cloud, no greater at first than a man's hand, began to grow.

Maltby's business frequently took him away from home, sometimes for a day, often for a week, once even as far as San Francisco. Always he returned fagged and hollow-eyed, but in the best of spirits. His return was sure to be followed in a few days by a small express package. The day succeeding the arrival of the package Maltby invariably deposited with his banker a sum of money. He had been known to deposit as much as one hundred thousand dollars.

After one of these business trips a subtle change came over him. For a time he was the Maltby of old, genial, unselfish, sociable. He spent hours in the company of his wife, and seemed unable to do enough for her.

Grace Maltby looked forward to these periods of restful happiness with wistful anxiety. Even they seemed fraught with a mystery she could not fathom. What kind of life was this man, her husband, actually leading, a life of which she was in total ignorance? At times rebellion within her rose so strong, that she told herself she could stand the uncertainty no longer, she must demand an explanation. This was nothing more than her just right. Suppose he refused to give it, could she leave him? She dared not answer. Vague, unutterable suspicions haunted her day and night, until she found herself starting at a shadow, or listening with bated breath whenever the door bell rang.

Then would come a week when Maltby spent every night locked in his study, and in the morning emerged looking like a ghost. That the life was telling on him would be evident even to a person less observing than his wife. She ventured to ask him once if he were not working too hard.

"Ah, dear one," he replied, taking her face between his hands, "have patience with me. In five years, perhaps sooner, I shall give up business altogether. Then you and I will start on our real honeymoon over summer seas."

She tried to take him at his word, tried to rest content. The crisis came sooner than she expected.

"Called away on important business. Can't say when I'll be back. Sorry I haven't time to come up to bid you good-bye," Maltby had telephoned, and now he had been gone more than a week.

All day her nerves had been on the rack. Never before had he failed to write, but this time not one word had she heard from him since that brief message over the wires. Impelled by some inexplicable impulse, she wandered down the hall toward her husband's study. The door was unlocked, just as he always left it. With a sudden twitch of nervous dread, she pushed it open. How frightfully still everything was. The long room wore a dejected and deserted air. The loneliness of it awed her. She crossed to the window and threw it open. A fresh breeze from the river fluttered the papers on the table. The slight rustle of paper caused her to look around, and her eye fell upon Maltby's desk, its pigeon-holes choked with letters.

All at once she was overpowered by the desire to touch something he had touched, to breathe the very air he had breathed, and before she realized what she was doing she was seated before his desk gazing aimlessly at the long row of neatly sorted letters. Somehow she felt unusually near to Maltby at that moment. She could almost feel the touch of his lips upon her cheek, almost hear the sound of his voice in her ear.

A blue envelope stuck halfway out from a package of white ones. She put up her hand to push it in even with the others, but there was something so strangely familiar about the letter that she pulled it out instead. With it came the other letters between which it had been tightly wedged. She smiled as she read the address on the blue envelope. So he kept her letters even now. She placed it on top of the package and gathered them all in her hands to thrust back into the desk. Then, as she declared to Maltby afterwards, not her own will, but some all-pervading, irresistible force impelled her to lay them down again and spread them out in a row before her. They were all evidently business letters. She opened one and read:

DEAR MALTBY.

I send by express this afternoon $10,000 in bills. You will know for what purpose to use them. Very truly yours,

H. C. CONINGSBY.

MY DEAR MR. MALTBY:

Certain things have brought to my knowledge the admirable uses to which you have been putting your money. Please accept the $25,000 I express to you to-day and go on with the good work.

Very truly yours,

RALPH BURNWAY.

MY DEAR MR. MALTBY:

It is rarely that one sees a man in your position living up to his convictions. Unknown to you I have been watching your efforts in behalf of education and reform. The $5,000 I send to-day is but a poor expression of my esteem.

Very sincerely yours,

EDGAR FULTON.

MR. ALTON MALTBY,
New York City.

DEAR SIR:

Send to-day by Wells and Fargo $50,000 in notes. Watch out for rise in copper.

Yours truly,

C. B. HIGGINS.

One after another she read with increasing astonishment. Each letter mentioned money sent to Maltby, in sums varying from $1000 to $100,000. The men who sent it were millionaires. Some names she had not heard. Others were world famous. Keats, the great copper king, had sent $75,000, while old Murray Claypole, notorious on the Street for his closefistedness, had begged Maltby to accept $100,000, giving no reason for the request.

The mystery of Maltby's life was deeper than before. All those pigeon-holes were doubtless packed with similar letters. But these were enough. She did not care to read more. The mere thought of what she had already done horrified her. Leaving the letters scattered on the desk she fled from the room and down-stairs. Almost breathless she reached the library and slammed the door behind her. Then with a cry of terror, she sank upon the floor and buried her face in her hands.

Maltby, a smile of satisfaction upon his lips, stood on the hearth rug warming his hands with his back to the fire.

As he caught sight of his wife's face the smile vanished. He sprung to her side and drawing her up tenderly, put his arms closely about her.

"Why, dear heart, dear heart, what is the matter? Did I frighten you? Forgive me, I thought only to surprise you."

For some minutes she could do nothing but cling to him and sob.

"Come sit down on the couch and tell me what is the matter. You are tired and nervous. I've been a brute to leave you so much alone. But, dear, look up, I shall not leave you again. I have good news for you. I am rich enough to do all I wish the rest of my life. You and I can start on our long, long honeymoon."

She pushed him from her and regarded him with startled, fearful eyes.

"Don't, don't talk to me like that. I must tell you all. I must—I must *know* all. I can't stand this life another day. You'll despise me when I tell you what I've done, but I couldn't help it, I simply couldn't help it. No, don't touch me until you have heard. You didn't write and I was terribly afraid something had happened to you. I thought of you every minute. This afternoon I started to come down here, but something made me go to your study. I have never been there before when you were away, and the room looked so desperately lonely it frightened me. Then I saw your desk and before I knew what I was doing I had pulled out a package of your letters, and, Oh! Alton! Alton! I read more than a dozen of them. I never did such a dishonorable thing before, please believe that I never did it before."

In spite of her resistance he caught her to him again and kissed her hair, her eyes, her throat. "Is that all?" he laughed, "Why, I am glad you read them. On my way home I wished you might read some of those letters before I got back. I've been saving them for you."

"Wished I might read those letters? What have they to do with you and me? I don't understand them; I don't understand you."

"Listen," he said, "I will tell you everything. You have nothing to fear."

He walked away a short distance so that he might watch the effect of his words. It was his turn to be apprehensive.

"The day you promised to marry me, I wanted money, wanted it more than I had ever wanted anything except you. My small salary as teller would not allow me to give you all the luxuries you had been accustomed to in your father's house. You did

not know what marrying a poor man would actually mean. Your father did, though, and told me so. From that hour I knew I could never marry you until I was a rich man. And I loved you. Ah, even you do not know how I loved you. Day after day I paid out money to men who could squander a fortune without feeling the loss as much as I would that of five dollars. Why couldn't I make money too? Then the thought came, if I could not make money in the way they did, why could I not make their brains work for me? Some time before I had received a card from a man who styled himself, 'Metaphysician and Thought Controller.' I hunted him up and found him in a house that he had tried to surround with an air of mystery. I fancy he had never before come in contact with a man so dead in earnest. I drained him dry of the little knowledge he possessed, paid him $5, and went home convinced that on his own ground I knew more than he did. That night I commenced my experiments. I began with Dan Beardsley, because I knew him well, knew his habits, his office and sleeping-room. I strove to drive my brain force straight to the root of his, to make him do, apparently of his own accord, what I willed him to do. Each night for three whole weeks I divested my mind of every thought but the thought of him and the command I laid upon him. At the end of that time a messenger brought me $5,000 and a tip on stocks. I took the money and Dan Beardsley forgot what he had done with it, forgot, in fact, that he had ever possessed it. Such was my command. From that moment I knew my success was assured. These millionaires should share their gains with me. Five millions I set as my limit, and tomorrow morning the one hundred thousand I shall receive will make the five millions complete. I have never drawn a penny from a man who was not a multi-millionaire, and I have never allowed one to send me a check. You have read some of the letters that accompany the money. They are all very much the same. When I had selected a man who should be an unwitting contributor to my fortune, I sought him out and got his face firmly stamped on my memory. I learned all I could about him, and, if possible, I paid a visit to his office. Then I began to send out my brain coil. When I took that trip to San Francisco, I played the Hon. Maurice Gundy for $100,000

and won. He doesn't know what to do with the millions he gets every year from his gold mines. Old Higgins was the hardest customer I tackled. I worked on that old duffer nearly two months and several times almost gave up in despair, but he ponied up at last to the tune of $50,000 and a rousing good tip on copper. I made five hundred thousand on copper that time and it all came out of old Higgins' pocket. The other day I met him on the street and couldn't resist the temptation to have another set-to with him. I thought I'd let him make up the five million, and now I've a letter in my pocket saying the money has been sent. I'm glad I've finished the business, for I couldn't stand the strain much longer. It was wearing me out. Often when I came out of that room up-stairs I was almost too weak to stand. You know now what my life has been — you know more about me than any other living soul knows or ever will know."

He paused, waiting for her to speak, but with hands tightly gripped in her lap she stared at him with horror-stricken eyes.

"Well, don't you approve of me?" he inquired uneasily.

"Do you mean that you have really told me the truth?" She spoke slowly, doubtfully.

"The truth? Why, of course I have. Every word is as true as gospel."

"Then you are a thief, a common thief! How can I believe it! How can I endure it!" and she threw herself passionately face down on the couch as though to shut out the sight of him.

The words and the gesture cut the man like a whip. He had not regarded himself in this light, and he rebelled at what he considered her injustice.

"Sit up and look at me," he commanded, harshly. "I'm not a monster to hide from. You call me a thief. I am no more a thief than any other business man, not half as much so as many. How do men like Burnway and Beardsley succeed in business? By the force of their own personality they make other men believe in them, they bend other wills to their interests. How do politicians and statesmen win their way to popularity and fame? They conquer prejudice and govern the masses by sheer force of superior mentality. All great leaders have done the same. What

others have wrought spontaneously, I planned to do deliberately. I could not compete with these men in their business methods. I had neither desire nor talent to become a political boss—in short, I was too honest. Why do you accuse me of stealing? Instead of condemning me, you ought to be proud of me. By the concentrated impetus of my own brain, by the potentiality of my own will, I have compelled men to send me money of which they have no need and which they will never miss. Would I have been less a thief in your eyes if I had wrung it dollar by dollar from the poor and the unfortunate?"

She put up a hand to stop him.

"No, I am not going to stop until I have had my say. Then you can do as you please. If you are so squeamish about my methods, what do you think about those old prophets of the East? How do you suppose Daniel managed those lions, or Elijah filled the widow's cruse? When a man is born with the power of projecting his own thought into the brain cells of another he has a right to use that power, provided he does it without injury to the person he controls. And what harm can you say I have done to old Higgins and his kind? I have as much right to use the gift I am born with, as a poet, a musician, or a painter. They strive to make money in their way — I, in mine. Instead of calling me ugly names, why don't you ask what I have done with this five million dollars? I have founded scholarships at Yale, Harvard, Vassar and a dozen other colleges; I have given hope to men released from prison without hope; I have sheltered the fatherless; I have pledged the income from four millions to the welfare of my fellow-men. One million I have reserved for you and me. What a glorious life you and I can spend together! Don't you see, now, that I am right?"

Grace Maltby's face was pinched and white, and her voice was unsteady.

"You argue well, Alton, but somehow I can't see it as you do. It seems to me that all this time you have been getting money under false pretences. I don't know anything about metaphysics or thought projection, I can comprehend only plain everyday facts. As far as I can see, you have given all this money away simply to quiet your own conscience. I'd rather have you

poor and feel that every penny you earned was honest gain. You may be a genius, but I'd rather have you an honest man."

Maltby bit his lip and ran his fingers through his hair. Here was a contingency he had failed to reckon upon. He wondered vaguely if the world would look upon him with the eyes of his wife. Perhaps he could convince her yet.

"Go up-stairs," said he, kindly, "and dress for dinner. Don't hate me until you have given me time to think over what you have said."

No sooner had his wife left the room, than the man locked the door, pulled down the shades and threw himself back into a deep arm-chair. One more trial and his work would be complete. A shock like the prick of an electric needle warned him that he had accomplished his purpose.

Again Maltby stood with his back to the fire, but this time no smile lifted the corners of his mouth. He was listening tensely to quick steps along the hall. Then the door opened and his wife with outstretched hands came straight toward him. Her face was flushed and happy.

"Alton, dear," she cried, "how stupid I was. You are right, of course. You will do more good in one year with that money than these old dullards would do in a lifetime."

"I knew you would understand," he whispered, putting his arm around her, and drawing her toward the dining-room.

But in Alton Maltby's heart the spirit of unrest took up its abiding place. He entertained no scruples about the money, that troubled him not at all, but he knew he had robbed his wife of her most precious heritage, her independent sense of right and wrong. He had made her like himself.

"Move On — Move On."*

BY MORGAN SHEPARD.

HE shattering "Morning of the Earthquake" and the after days of flame and chaos had become memories only in our turmoil of untimed work and feverish re-adjustment. Bread and canned goods were plentiful while the embers of our city cooled, and there was promise, too, for time for rest, and time to gather our scattered faculties — but still we hungered, our canned and pickled stomachs cried out for fresh green stuff, and the gnawing ache was worse than thirst and more relentless.

The red wreckage of a city was gridironed by scars that represented streets and all stretched smouldering under a pall of sulphur-hued mist. The consuming harvest of the flame had passed, but an aftermath of ashes remained to testify that "man was but dust," and to ashes should return.

Here and there a vicious jet of fire spurted upward with a hiss of triumph in searching out and finding some hidden chaff to deal with as a great city had been dealt with. Chaos was subsiding and Man began to think again. Eyes glazed by terror or dim with stupid resignation once more carried a low light of some reasoning thought.

The Water Front — that haven for the distracted throngs of the Fire Days — gave up its cowering and waiting crews. "Move on — move on," had been yelled from behind the bayonet's point. Little bands of aimless creatures stumbled forth into the ruins to start again, beyond or amid that crushed and still smouldering City of Memory.

From my hill I could see scores of these plodding bands melt like shadows into the lowering murk that clung to the long stretches of gray streets — named streets in irony surely. All

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these shadows of Men bent upon some vague purpose were the flotsam and jetsam after a storm of fire and a quaking earth. But to us who had worked and sickened for the lack of fresh green things the word "Orange" was music and "Potato" was song. I was bidden to find them or anything, be it ever so green.

My path to the Water Front by way of Vallejo Street looked comparatively cool and plain. It was no hard matter to select, for all streets were as clearly defined as if painted on a red map. Oakland lay bright and clean across the Bay. Surely our need might be found for a price in that oasis beyond the water!

Vallejo did not meet my hopes, but all roads were doubtless equally bad, so I made the best of it, with hot feet, avoiding the many scorching pitfalls that waited the unwary.

Coming my way I saw a Mother, with no Man to guide and guard. He may have been among the very hot ruins near where she passed. Through reeking ashes there trudged behind her four children, a boy, perhaps of twelve, and three girls, all younger — one of them a silent little toddler. Each wayfarer bore some burden too great, but too precious to abandon — pots, pans, besmudged bedding and the ever-familiar pillow-case, stuffed with God knows what — and Bread.

A dirty, begrimed, ash-dimmed crew of wanderers on a strange earth, with faces branded by hopelessness, hunger and thirst.

"Move on, move on," the military had ordered. They were moving on, but action had no meaning. The Mother's lips were dry, flabby and purposeless, her eyes dead, save for a nameless gleam that distorted the heavy eye-lids. She stared before her out of those dull eyes and turned neither to right nor left, her sordid little escort of wordless offspring following along after her. They took no cognizance of me or of anything. The command "Move on" echoed like throbbing Fear in hearts whose emotions were burned to ashes with all the rest of their world.

In that company there was a sixth. Wrapped by a soiled red shawl to its Mother was a nursing babe, with face buried deep in the bare breast of the woman. One little arm, released from bond, dangled in rhythm with the Mother's plodding steps; the fingers of the other hand were spread futilely across the place that gave it food, and showed a clutching gesture of baby hunger.

But the hands were gray, and gray, too, were the dirt-clouded creases about the baby neck. I saw that the child was *dead.*

"Mother" I said, in the language of her People, "Your baby — do you know, Mother — that — that, your baby is dead?"

She made no reply, there was no exclamation. She stopped heavily, as did all of her followers — my words might have been a military "halt." Her expression did not change a shade from its fixed despair, there was not even a twitch of the shadowed lips or a tremor of the swollen eyelids. Her hands pressed the little one to the dried fountains over her heart. Then, with awkward, fumbling fingers, she undid the bonds that held her babe to her; the child's head fell back inertly against the mother's soiled hand and slowly she raised the little body to her parched cheek as if to listen for a heart beat; but she heard none, for, turning to the dust and ashes about her, she stared forth vacantly as she had before I had given my message. She did not wake from the lethargy of a speechless woe. Judging by that unmoved face life might have been to her the same as it was before she learned that Death reposed upon her bosom.

Near where we stood there flared up one of those vicious spurts of flame, dying reluctantly amid a tangle of wreckage. Thrusting itself through this mass was a mound of glowing embers. Deliberately she stooped and laid her babe upon that waiting pyre, and leaned over it a little time. "Dust to dust," I said in my heart.

She may have kissed her child, she may have stammered a last benediction over her dead, but what the last rites of that burial were I do not know, for her face was hidden. Then a pungent smell of the Mother's burning hair came to me, and a little veil of smoke made a halo about her bended head.

She spoke no word, there was no cry, no tears came to the dull eyes, and her lips were unchanged. Then she fell again into the weary trudging I had interrupted. The drowsy smoke hung low along the broken street up which the woman passed. The sun shone red through a veil that rose over the funeral pyre of a City and a Babe, as a Mother obeyed the command of God and the Military to MOVE ON.

A Popular Story.*

BY DON MARK LEMON.

I DON'T know who wrote the story. It was a newspaper yarn, taken from an exchange that probably had got it of a syndicate — but it certainly was a clever little sketch.

I read it on the train one afternoon while going home from the bank, and, when I had finished it, I slapped my knee and exclaimed, "By George! that's neat." Then I got to wondering if anybody had ever tried the scheme, or had the writer thought it up himself, just for a story plot.

When I got home I read it to my wife, and she laughed and said there was a rat in the cage down cellar, and if it were gone in the morning she would know that I had taken it with me to the bank. Of course she was only jesting, but it went to show how easily one could carry out the idea in the story, and I must have looked thoughtful, for my wife suddenly came over and threw her arms about me and exclaimed: "Why, Will, you wouldn't do such a dreadful thing!"

Just to tease her, I looked sly and asked her if it were a fair sized rat in the trap, or only a mouse. Well, she doesn't know yet how to take me when I'm joking, and pretty soon she went down cellar and when I strolled down a little later, the trap and rat were both gone.

You see, the newspaper story was something like this: One day at a bank a bundle of twenty one-thousand dollar bills was found missing from the cashier's booth, and things were getting to look bad for the cashier, when the teller saw the tail of a rat sticking out from under a desk that set against the grating inclosing the cashier's booth.

Well, they moved the desk, and by George! if that rat hadn't

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got himself caught between the bars and desk and strangled to death, with a bunch of five-dollar bills in his mouth. I think it was about twenty bills.

They all congratulated the cashier. Of course the rat had stolen the missing twenty thousand, and afterwards came back for more bills, and had been caught and strangled in the grating. They hunted hours for his hole, but couldn't find it. However, the rear door of the bank opened on a short, blind alley, and it was plain as Texas on the map that the rat had stolen in that way, and gone out the same way with the twenty thousand, and the bills were somewhere outside in the alley. But they never found where.

It was just here that the writer of the story got down to the neatest little stroke. I don't remember just his words, but they were something in this order: Why couldn't the cashier have brought a strangled rat in his pocket to the bank, stolen the twenty thousand, placed a package of five-dollar bills in the rat's mouth, and slipped him under the desk? That would have turned all suspicion from the cashier, and when you consider how simple a thing it was to do, and how few men in the world are strictly honest, you finished reading the story with the conviction that the cashier had stolen the money and done the trick himself.

Well, that's the newspaper sketch. Now, here's my story, and mine is where the fun comes in. About eleven o'clock next day, down at the bank where I worked — I mean the day after the sketch appeared in the newspaper — we discovered that a bunch of bills had been mislaid, then another bunch, then another and another; and altogether two thousand dollars in bills was found missing from different drawers and baskets.

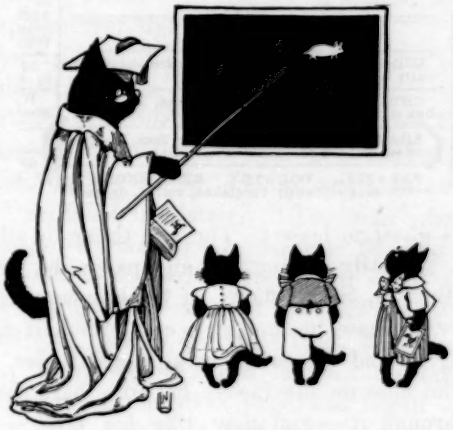
Suddenly I smelt a mouse, as the saying goes, and began hunting for a rat. I found him! Then the cashier found another rat, about the same time the teller found another. Then the president saw a tail sticking from under a desk, and poked out the fattest rat you ever saw.

I was laughing by this time till I could hardly stoop to hunt for rats. You should have been around the bank yourself that morning — it was better than having money there.

Well, altogether, we found seven rats, every one of them strangled and dead and each with a bunch of bills in his mouth. The

bills we recovered came to seven hundred dollars, but thirteen hundred was still missing. So you see that little newspaper story cost our bank just one thousand three hundred dollars, and we had to hush it up or lose our reputation, for seven dishonest men in one bank was a bit too much.

But those seven dead rodents, hidden all about the office! I think I would have laughed had I lost the thirteen hundred myself.



The Sale of Shakespeare's Ghost.

BY DON MARK LEMON.

ROBERT VAREL could scarcely credit his eyes as they fell upon a unique advertisement, which stood third among those under the heading of "To Let" in the Morning *Star*. It must have been a hundred times, he thought, that he read and re-read the marvellous announcement which some one had heavily scored in the newspaper lying beside his plate in the café where he ate his breakfast.

TO LET

LODGING HOUSE, 30 rooms, furnished, centrally located. Box 9, Star Office.

CHICKEN RANCH, well stocked, ten acres. Box 47, Star Office.

SHAKESPEARE'S GHOST, also Tom Moore's. Box 44, Star Office.

PALATIAL COUNTRY RESIDENCE, 18 rooms magnificently furnished, stable, orchard

Shakespeare's ghost to lease! The one thing in all the world that he wanted. Hastily seizing pen and paper, he wrote a communication to Box 44, Star Office. If Shakespeare's ghost could be leased, he would lease it, though it cost him half his fortune. All his life long he had dreamt of being a great poet. This ambition was as the nose on his face — he drew half the breath of his existence through it — and now, like his nose — which was an excellent Roman one — the fulfilment of his ambition seemed within his easy grasp. His father had left him a fortune running into the millions. He had all that wealth could buy. What he wanted was fame.

He could scarcely wait for an answer to his letter of inquiry, but finally it came. It was by word of mouth, and the gentleman who had Shakespeare's ghost to lease was as unique as his

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advertisement. He was an indescribable little being, with very large head and very slight body, and put Robert Varel strongly in mind of one of Wells's inhabitants of the moon.

The stranger came to business at once, offering to lease the ghost of Shakespeare for ten thousand dollars a week, or thirty-five thousand dollars a month.

"But where's the ghost?" queried the young millionaire, looking about.

The other held a portfolio in his hand. He now opened it and placed upon the table a leather-bound blank book and a fountain pen. Then, from an inner pocket of his attire, he drew forth a little oblong case, from which he produced a gold pencil-tip representing the ideal head of Shakespeare. The face was set with two blue-gray stones for eyes, which seemed to Robert Varel to emit a supernatural light.

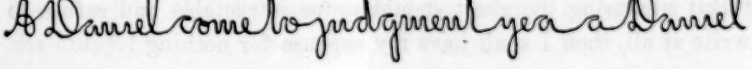
Placing the tip upon the head of the fountain pen, the ghost-merchant handed the pen to the young millionaire, opened the blank book at the first ruled page, and commanded "Write!"

Robert Varel stared at the pen with its strange gold tip, then at the blank book, then at the little ghost merchant himself.

"Write!" repeated the latter. "The man who holds in his hand that image of Shakespeare controls the spirit of the immortal bard, and, as he writes, the astral spirit of sweet Will guides the pen and indites lines of wonderful verse. Begin on the first ruled line, just at the little black dot."

Obediently, Varel took the pen between his thumb and first finger, smoothed down the blank page, and began to write as directed, or, rather, the ghost of Shakespeare began to write. For no sooner had the pen-point touched the paper than, with some power other than that of the hand which held it, the instrument began to travel across the ruled page.

When the pen had covered a span of about four inches, the poet-aspirant let it fall from his nerveless hand and started back in bewilderment, for there before him, across the white page in linked, unfamiliar script, was the line



The ghost merchant thrust himself foward and read the writing eagerly. "'A Daniel come to judgment! Yea, a Daniel!' Ah! who but the immortal Shakespeare could have written that?"

"But that line is in 'The Merchant of Venice,'" protested the other. "What good will Shakespeare's ghost do me if it keeps rewriting what is written?"

"That is only by way of proof that Shakespeare's ghost controls the pen," explained the little merchant. "Merely an autograph line of the great bard — he always begins that way. Now, place the pen at the beginning of the next line, just on that second little black dot, and let it glide freely in your hand under control of the ghost, and beyond a doubt we shall get some original lines. Bear in mind, you must always begin in an orderly way at the commencement of a line, for the astral spirit, not being in perfect touch with the physical plane whereon we reside, must, like the blind, be more or less guided in its efforts."

Placing the pen as he was bid, Robert Varel permitted it to move freely in his hand, and as fast almost as a careful man could write, the ghost traced, in the same peculiar script, seven lines of blank verse, which seemed to be not only in the unmistakable style of Shakespeare, but also worthy of that supreme master.

A dozen times the young millionaire re-read these lines, and his heart beat high. At last his dream of dreams was to be realized — he should become not only a great poet, but the greatest of poets. Having in his control the ghost of Shakespeare, he should, to all effect, be Shakespeare himself.

"Ten thousand a week, you say?"

"Only ten thousand, and considering the genius of the bard, my terms are more than generous. Why, sir, in this coming week the ghost may write another Hamlet, and think of the glory which the accredited authorship of such a work will confer upon you."

"Another Hamlet!" cried the poet-aspirant, in a kind of delicious maze.

"Another Hamlet! Or perhaps another King Lear!"

"Ten thousand a week," deliberated the young millionaire. "But supposing the ghost should prove intractable and refuse to write at all, then I shall have my expense for nothing!"

"Certainly, sir. But, I assure you, Shakespeare's ghost is an affable, familiar ghost — a very tractable spirit, indeed — full of the milk of ghostly kindness, and within the coming week may write, as I have said, another immortal tragedy in five acts. However," the little merchant shrugged his shoulders, "if you consider the compensation too high, and are content with a lesser glory, I have here the genius that controls the ghost of Tom Moore, the author of 'Lalla Rookh,' and of innumerable beautiful lyrics, such as 'The Last Rose of Summer' and 'Oft in the Stilly Night.' My terms for this astral are but four thousand a week."

As he ceased, the merchant drew a second case from his pocket and produced therefrom a silver pencil-tip representing the head of Thomas Moore. Affixing this tip to another fountain pen, he handed the pen to Varel. Then, drawing a ruled sheet of writing paper from his portfolio and spreading the sheet out before the young millionaire, he bid the latter place his hand upon the paper in readiness to aid the ghost in inscribing whatsoever verse should inspire that poetic spirit.

Once again doing as he was bid, Varel witnessed the fountain pen tipped with the head of the Irish bard move like a magic wand across the ruled sheet, and leave in its path twelve lines of exquisite verse.

"Ah!" cried the little ghost merchant, "Tom's ghost is in fine fettle today. That song alone ought to be worth four thousand."

The young millionaire stared at the lines, turned the sheet of paper over, and stared at the other side, which was as white and blank as paper can be; stared at the fountain pen with its silver tip, and then said:

"For what sum will you sell both ghosts?"

"Sell!" cried the little merchant, clutching at the table in horror. "Sell the ghost of Shakespeare! Sell the ghost of Tom Moore! Sell!"

The last word was fairly shrieked, and the poet-aspirant retreated in some trepidation; but, recollecting that he had millions back of him, he soon plucked up courage enough to repeat his query.

"Yes; sell! What do you ask for both ghosts — that is, for these images that control the ghosts? I'll give you fifty thousand dollars."

"Fifty thousand dollars! You insult me, sir!"

"A hundred thousand."

"Pish!"

"Two hundred thousand."

"Bosh!"

"Four hundred thousand."

"A mere bagatelle!"

"Six hundred thousand."

"I am deaf, sir, unless you talk in millions."

"One million!"

Shylock himself could not have looked more covetously at a bag of golden ducats than the big-headed little ghost merchant now looked at the leather-bound blank book and the two image-tipped fountain pens lying before him upon the table, and when finally he pushed those appliances of literature towards the young millionaire, it was with a sigh worthy of Hamlet.

"Then they are mine!" cried the poet-aspirant. "Mine! the ghosts of Shakespeare and Tom Moore!"

"My need, but not my will, consents," and again the little merchant sighed.

That afternoon Robert Varel turned over to the ghost merchant United States bonds to the amount of one million dollars, and the ghosts of Shakespeare and Tom Moore passed under the young millionaire's personal control. That same afternoon he settled down to making immortal literature.

The little merchant had given the poet-aspirant two leather-bound blank books and bid him use one for Shakespeare and the other for Tom Moore, and not to change the order of the books, as the ghosts were particular spirits. He also had presented Varel with the two fountain pens before mentioned, and for a week all went well. The ghost of Shakespeare wrote an entire play, an historic-comedy in five acts, entitled "Prince Edward," and the ghost of Tom Moore fairly outdid Tom Moore in the flesh in the number of songs and lyrics that it struck off.

True, the play was not quite equal to "Henry VIII.," nor

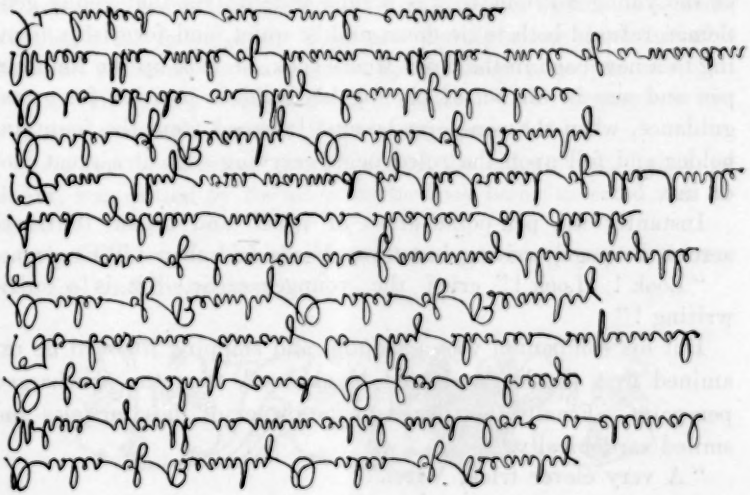
were the songs and lyrics equal to "The Last Rose of Summer," yet, taken altogether, the writings were excellent stuff — far better work than Varel himself could have turned out, — and the young millionaire was entirely satisfied with his purchase.

Indeed, so elated was he that one afternoon he invited to his rooms a couple of critics to whom he had shown some of his ghostly writings, and who had doubted his ability to turn out such clever verse, and bringing forth the Tom Moore book, laid it upon the table, placed in his hand the fountain pen tipped with the image of the immortal Irish bard, and let the ghost guide the pen across the ruled page.

The extempore lyric that the young fellow turned out in the next twenty minutes more than astounded his critics. It was classical.

"Pooh! that's nothing!" and Varel turned to a new page, again placed his hand and pen in proper position for astral guidance, and the ghost of Tom Moore began to indite a second lyric.

But a change must have come over the spirit of the ghost's poetic dream, for, instead of an exquisite inspiration glorifying the blank page, springing forth like a symphony of laughing flower from the sod at the touch of the golden pencil of Apollo, this is what the ghost indited:



For some time the poet and his critics puzzled over the foregoing hieroglyphics, and could make neither head nor tail of them. At last, however, a brilliant idea seized the elder critic, and turning the writing upside down he held it before a mirror and read it off aloud, as follows:

O Isles of Beauty! O Isles of Beauty!
Where youth is immortal and love is eternal.
O for a ship and O for a breeze
To bear me away to thy shores supernal!

O Isles of Beauty! O Isles of Beauty!
The airs of heaven are fanning thy myrtle,
And golden musk is shaken at dusk
From thy roses, warmed by the breast of the turtle.

O Isles of Beauty! O Isles of Beauty!
O to abide on thy beautiful shore!
Where the smile of heaven with the smile of a maiden
Is linked in one smile evermore.

"My God!" cried Varel, "the ghost must have written it standing on his head."

The two critics turned and stared at their young friend.

"You're sick, my boy," sympathized the elder, "that's what is the matter with you. You're sick, and it has turned your brain a bit. Lie down awhile and be quiet."

From the inverted lyric it would have seemed that the brain of the young millionaire was turned indeed; yet that young gentleman refused both to lie down and be quiet, and feverishly turning to a new page in the Tom Moore book, he took up the fountain pen and was in the act of placing his hand in position for astral guidance, when the pen-point became loosened from the fountain-holder and fell upon the ruled page, carrying with it a great blot of ink.

Instantly the pen-point arose of itself and began to travel across the page, writing but three words and then falling prone.

"Look! Look!" cried the younger critic, "it is a spirit writing!"

But his companion was a skeptic, and stepping forward he examined first the leather-bound blank book, then the discharged pen-point. Finally, he turned to the owner of those articles and smiled sardonically.

"A very clever trick, Varel."

"Trick!" gasped the poet-aspirant, still gazing blankly at this latest astral specimen of Moore's melodies:

"Yes, — trick. These blank pages — as of course you must know — have been overwritten with some secret colorless fluid, and whenever a pen of a certain kind of metal is brought into contact with any one of these invisible lines of verse, that pen is drawn along by the magnetic power of the chemical fluid in which the line was originally written, and the pen, being filled with ink, of necessity traces that particular line of verse, so that it becomes visible to the naked eye. This pen travels along these invisible lines as certainly as an electric spark along a copper wire."

"A very pretty explanation!" exclaimed the younger critic. "A new magnetic force! Very pretty, indeed."

"As for the inverted poem," added the elder critic, "that, no doubt, was caused by the page in the book being inverted and reversed."

What Robert Varel himself said was some incoherent reference to a fool and his money.

The Tax on Moustaches.*

BY H. J. W. DAM.

[This story, which appeared in THE BLACK CAT nearly ten years ago, is here republished to meet the never ending demand of old subscribers and for the benefit of its army of new readers; furthermore, as an example to writers of the sort of tale for which THE BLACK CAT pays **Fifteen Hundred Dollars cash.**]

THE rivalry between Vincent and Halladay was bitter enough before Miss Belmayne occurred. It then assumed an aspect almost Corsican.

Vincent was the Rome correspondent of the London *Thunderer*. Halladay was the Roman representative of the London *National*. Vincent was an Oxford man; Halladay's intellectual credentials were dated at Cambridge. Vincent was of middle height, dark, lithe, and athletic. He had an electric energy, and quick, penetrating brown eyes with a merry light in them that was attractive; also a brown moustache that approached the feminine ideal. Halladay was of stouter and flabbier build, with a blond, sharp-pointed beard, and a face like Lord Salisbury's. Lord Salisbury was, in fact, secretly his model. He was the cousin of a peer, but notwithstanding this drawback had managed to develop a value of his own, which shows his great force and determination. He was also five years older than Vincent, who was only thirty-one, and, in the game of life, if not of love, years have a distinct value of their own. Both men drew lavish salaries, moved in the highest society of Rome, and were polished carpet cavaliers and very popular. Both, too, had weaknesses which revealed their temperaments and are correlated forces in this narrative.

Vincent's weakness was a small sloop yacht which he kept at Naples for vacation cruises. Not having time, in the pressure of events, to love a woman, he loved this yacht. Whenever social, diplomatic, or international affairs did not command his atten-

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tion, he and his pipe and the yacht had charming hours of mental communion together in his apartment. Whenever leaves of absence permitted, the three did Capri, Sorrento, Ischia, and the adjacent Turner paintings of the Bay of Naples in congenial company. On stretching seas, in the calm and gorgeous afterglow, he dreamed of a possible fair one in the nebulous future. This showed his temperament to be romantic.

Halladay's weakness was "The War Cloud in the Balkans." Whenever other news failed he would knit his editorial brow and use his portentous ink and see ominous signs of trouble in Servia, Bulgaria, and the Balkan Provinces. One can always see ominous signs of trouble in Servia, Bulgaria, and the Balkan Provinces, and they make an excellent frame on which to hang long and sweeping periods dealing with possible international complications. From which it will be seen that Halladay was ambitious. He always used the most majestic polysyllables that fitted, and these won him the reputation of a powerful and far-seeing correspondent, which reputation he confidently believed that he deserved.

These diverse temperaments caused the two men to secretly scorn each other, and this feeling was not diminished by their alternating newspaper triumphs, important bits of news from the Quirinal or the ministries, which fell now to one and now to the other, and caused the usual variations of anger and delight.

Thus it was when Miss Belmayne and her parents arrived at the Grand Hotel for the winter. Parents are, of course, of no importance, but it may be mentioned that Mr. Belmayne had made stoves, and incidentally accumulated two millions, on the shore of Lake Michigan. Miss Belmayne was one of those girls who, without effort, bowl over unprepared Englishmen like tenpins. She had style, Paris style, and this, when the dressmaker is driven with an intelligent curb, is very fascinating. She was fairly tall, blonde, had ideas, dark blue eyes, and a frank, sympathetic nature. All these exercised a novel and powerful influence on the two men. They met her on the same evening at a diplomatic reception. The charms mentioned were quite enough for Vincent. He went home, lighted his pipe, put on his slippers, looked at the fire and said "By Jove!" He said nothing more

to the fire or anything else for two mortal hours. Then he said "By Jove!" again and went to bed. The same charms sufficed to stagger Halladay, but to them he added the two millions. He was older and more practical. He wrote his cousin the peer and told him to be sure to come to Rome that winter. Then he mentally watered his genealogical tree, resolved to lay siege to the beautiful Vicksburg with the firm patience of a Grant, and absently took a cold bath. This chilled him, at midnight, but did not check his ardor.

Miss Belmayne took Rome and the Forum and the Coliseum very seriously. This was a novelty to Vincent and Halladay, so they awoke to its grandeur, and took it very seriously indeed. They sent her books, and bronzes, and prehistoric pavements, and fragments of ancient palaces by the cartload. Papa Belmayne, who was indulgent, said he didn't particularly care for a macadamized drawing-room and engaged another room to hold the ancient architecture. The attentions of the two men soon became constant and very marked. And through archæological mornings and afternoon drives, on the blocks of the Forum and the steps of the Coliseum, on the Pincian Hill and the roof of St. Peter's, they fell deeper and deeper in love, but kept their own counsel. The dear girl was as yet unconscious of it, but they hated each other with the hate of the 1850-60 dramas. It was anything — all — to win the adorable beauty, and sentence the other fellow to life-long despair.

The primal cause of all the subsequent trouble was Vincent's yacht. He had, on various occasions, shown Miss Belmayne the high responsibility of his position as correspondent of the *Thunderer*. Now and then he wrote his despatches at her hotel, after dinner, and two days later would read her the powerful, ponderous *Thunderer* editorials, which, telegraphed all over Europe, were based upon the despatches sent by him. This interested her tremendously. Like every true American girl of nowadays — in her ante-matrimonial, ante-babies-of-her-own period — she secretly longed to sway nations. To write despatches which set Europe and America in a ferment, which caused Salisbury, the German Emperor, and the Czar to instantly buckle on their skates, as it were, and dash off to do something final, seemed to her the only

occupation worthy of woman or of man. She found nothing so delightful as helping him, and he knew nothing so delightful as her help, notwithstanding that the hotel note-paper was scarcely the proper stationery to bear this freight of heavy thought. When the *Thunderer* arrived she would read the despatches with a thrill of interest born of her indirect connection with the great newspaper. Finally she wanted to write a despatch — just a little one — all by herself. He, reserving rights of correction and revision, consented. It was a safe contribution, not at all sensational, about the returns of the olive crop. She wrote it. She also read it, word for word, in print, two days later. That experience was a crisis in her life. Destiny opened out its arms to her as a Woman of Might and Power. Halladay lost ground visibly after that and had emotional neuralgia of the most torturing kind.

The cause of the trouble, as before stated, was the yacht. A dirty steam-trader from Marseilles, while coming to anchor, had taken off the bowsprit of Vincent's secondary idol, together with a large slice of her peerless nose. It was like an accident to a highly esteemed female cousin. The best medical attention was instantly necessary. Vincent knew the Italians. He knew that if he did not personally arrange the contract for repairs at Naples the contractor who did them would afterwards own the yacht, bring suit against his personal fortune, and hold his family responsible for the balance of the money. In short, he had to go to Naples for two days. Miss Belmayne, strange to say, received the news with joy.

"I'll look after things. I'll send anything that's necessary to the *Thunderer*," she said.

He stared at her in astonishment.

"Oh, do let me! Please do! I want to show you the breadth of my mind."

Events were very dull journalistically. And when a beautiful girl wants to show you the breadth of her mind it is not only dangerous to say "no," but wise to say "yes," that is, if you are as much in love as he was. He finally consented and she radiated enthusiasm. "Just read the papers if you *do* send anything, and be guided by them," said he. "But don't — er — don't send *too* much, and nothing that isn't important." Then he went away to

single combat with the contractor. She couldn't do him any harm. If what she sent was bad it wouldn't be printed. And his consent to the proposal would certainly do him infinite good in connection with another proposal. Thus he mused, in love, and in the train to Naples.

Now, it is doubtless fully understood by all adult persons that when an American girl desires to show the breadth of her mind she is destined to show it at all hazards. The responsibility of her position weighed heavily upon Miss Belmayne. She came down to breakfast next morning with a far-away look in her eyes and two brown prima-donna hair-curlers still nestling in the soft silken hair above her forehead. Papa Belmayne at first assumed that this was a new style in breakfast toilets and said nothing. He could never keep quite abreast of the fashions and he had made mistakes before. Then he conceived that it might possibly be an evidence of strong, disturbing emotion, and ventured to inquire. She gravely removed the hair-curlers, and after striking her hair three skilful taps put them in her pocket. Then she cautiously whispered to him the news. She, SHE, was the Acting Rome Correspondent of the *Thunderer*. Papa was startled. It flashed instantly upon his practical Chicago mind that with a wire like that something might be done in wheat. But no — on second thought — that wouldn't do. Still, he was proud, very proud, of his daughter. He proceeded to like Vincent amazingly. "We'll give the old *Thunderer* a lift, my dear, if anything happens. I'll furnish the statesmanship and you look out for the spelling and punctuation," said he. Halladay he had never liked. That gentleman's family tree and its luxuriant foliage had been exhibited several times in his presence and it annoyed him. Not having dealt largely in trees in his career, he didn't believe in them. So Vincent stock rose clear above the hundred mark in the Belmayne family, and Halladay's fell steadily to zero, with no offers.

Halladay knew this and fumed in secret. He also guessed at once from Miss Belmayne's words and questions the foolish thing that Vincent had done. He saw in it only a clever move of his rival, and also saw a chance to spoil Vincent's chances and win Miss Belmayne with a single safe play. He was devoted but

thoughtful all that afternoon. Then he went away and meditated.

At ten that evening he entered the Belmayne drawing-room, sharp-pointed, immaculate, and smiling with a visible air of conscious triumph.

"Ha, ha, ha! Sorry for Vincent. Pity he's away," he said.

"Oh! What has happened? I've read all the evening papers," said the Acting Correspondent.

"Can't say, you know. Must keep a good thing to myself when I get it."

"Is it a very good thing?"

"Very."

"Is it a *big* thing?" This with fear and trembling.

"Biggest in months. May cause a rebellion in Italy. You know these Italians. Hair-trigger sort of people when anything happens that they don't quite like."

"Oh! Mr. Halladay! Please tell me."

He proceeded not to tell her, for the next half hour, in the cleverest way possible. He dangled the bait before her and cruelly enjoyed her attempts to seize it. He saw with concealed fury, however, that her anxiety was the tender anxiety that he most greatly feared. This armed him in his resolve, and having excited her curiosity till it was painful, he went downstairs.

"What is it, my dear?" said Belmayne.

Miss Belmayne was dumb with disappointment. She loved Vincent — she knew it in that moment — and he would be dreadfully beaten, without excuse, and perhaps lose his position. Because of their compact he had even failed to notify the *Thunderer* of his absence.

"I've missed the greatest news of the year," she said sharply. "Do go down to the smoking-room. They're sure to be talking about it. Follow Halladay and see to whom he speaks. We *must* get something about it."

Papa Belmayne was stout, vigorous, fifty-five, and came from Chicago. His hair was curly and showed only a few white lines. Spurred by parental love and a desire for something to do that was slowly undermining his constitution, he followed Halladay like the species of hound which is called sleuth. His eyes twinkled and his blood was up. He had always known that any-

body can be a newspaper correspondent, and he enjoyed trying it. He quickly found Halladay in the smoking-room and kept his eye on him. Halladay observed this and was deeply glad. It was as he had hoped. Belmayne had fallen heels over head into his trap.

Halladay was in earnest, low-toned conversation with Sir George Perleybore, a tall, thin, white-haired, perfectly groomed baronet, of any age above sixty-five, the kind of lay figure met everywhere in the best hotels of the south of Europe during winter. Sir George was astonished. Papa Belmayne saw this plainly, and lay low like Brer Rabbit. Halladay finally went away. Papa then greeted Sir George carelessly and proposed a whisky-and-soda. Also cigars. Sir George said: "Most extraordinary! Wouldn't have believed it. What'll these beggars do next!" Papa swelled with repressed eagerness. Then it all came out. He got it — every word of it — and chuckled at his own diplomacy. Then he flew to the elevator.

"Now I know what I'm talking about, my dear," he said, when her burst of joy was over. "I understand these things and you don't. I haven't been a State senator two terms for nothing. You sit down and take your pen and I'll dictate."

Papa expanded like a balloon, walked the floor, and dictated. He measured every word by cubic measurement. He dictated the short despatch four times and half of another time in all. She wrote and scratched out and turned the dictionary pages feverishly, and thought how clearly Edward would see the breadth of her mind.

And neither Edward nor the *Thunderer* knew the doom that was impending.

When the despatch was finally completed she knew that she could have expressed it much more elegantly, but papa was inexorable. He'd tell the story in America, by jiminy, and he wanted to read his own despatch in the London *Thunderer*. So she copied it in a bold, round hand, signed Vincent's cipher, gave it to Vincent's commissionnaire, who called at eleven, and both she and papa went to bed feeling very well indeed.

At ten o'clock the next morning — Roman time — the face of Europe wore a fearful geographical frown. Consternation, perplexity and uncertainty ruled in five empires. From Downing Street the news went under the channel to the Paris Elysée and

overland to the winter palaces of Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg. In her honest attempt to sway nations, the dear girl had succeeded. The Thrones sent messengers to the foreign offices; the foreign offices wired the ambassadors, and neither wire nor cable could work half fast enough to please the respective senders. When the stock exchanges opened, Italian Rentes fell six points, and their allies weakened in proportion. The smash had come. Italy was bankrupt and the Triple Alliance would fall to pieces. It all arose from a despatch and an editorial in the columns of the London *Thunderer*, those columns which were held to be as infallible as the multiplication table itself. This was the despatch:—

ITALY.

[From our own correspondent.]

I saw Signor Crespo this evening, and learned from him that the new and important item in the Budget, the new source of revenue which has been promised and upon which great hopes have been based, will take the form of a national tax upon moustaches. In his bill, which he will introduce in the Chamber to-morrow, it will be provided that every citizen of Italy wearing a moustache shall pay a sumptuary tax thereupon of one lira yearly. In the ordinary course this tax will yield the twenty million lire per annum which are so greatly needed and whose source up to now it has been impossible to discover. Of course a certain amount of opposition from the Left is confidently to be expected. The tax on moustaches will undoubtedly afford an opportunity to the Socialists to champion individual rights and protest against interference therewith; but, on the other hand, the clerical wing are certain to view the innovation with favor. The popular acceptation of the measure is, however, difficult to forecast.

This was probably the most nonsensical despatch that has ever appeared in any newspaper, great or small. The editor had looked at it, incredulous. The leader writer said, "H'm, it's neck or nothing with Crespo." Only Vincent's cipher and the condition of Italy made belief possible; but it was believed. This was the editorial:—

> The extraordinary course which has been adopted by the Prime Minister of Italy in order to replenish the national treasury is so radical an extension of the general principle of taxation that neither its wisdom nor its result can yet be declared with any degree of certainty. Statistics do not, unfortunately, furnish us with the number of Italian citizens who at the period of the last census were wearing moustaches. It is a well-known fact, however, that the custom of cultivating hair in an ornamental form upon the upper lip is perhaps more firmly established as a national habit in Italy than in any other country of the world at the present time. The first lesson of this proposed legislation is its certain indication of the extreme if not hopeless financial straits into which the monarchy has fallen. The second is the very doubtful character of the tax itself as a reliable source of revenue, when viewed from the standpoints of expediency and of successful enforcement. It will be necessary for legislation to establish with perfect clearness not only what a moustache legally is, but also at what age, both of the wearer and of the moustache itself, it becomes taxable; and in these two directions, to say nothing of the popular acceptance or rejection of the measure, the visible difficulties are both many and great.

On that very afternoon a man in a yachting suit went over the side of a yacht at Naples and was rowed to the pier. He was happy and buoyant with the buoyant happiness of the man who loves and is loved. Upon reaching the pier he bought the second edition of the *Corrière di Napoli* and glanced at the telegraph columns. The *Thunderer* despatch had been cabled back to Naples, and under sensational headlines was the first to meet his eye.

His first thought was that he was losing his mind and inventing a telegram. Then something flashed upon him, and his heart seemed to stop beating. He staggered to the curb of the pier, sat down and shut his eyes. He was never sure afterwards whether he fainted or not. For five minutes he knew only the silent whirl of agonized thoughts. He grasped at once what had happened. It was Halladay's work, and Halladay had ruined him. The *Thunderer* was the laughing stock of Europe, and he, as the responsible sender of that despatch, was journalistically done for. Ambition spoke first, and the pain was of the bitterest. Love spoke next, but with all his rage and despair he could not find the power to be harsh to Miss Belmayne. "The dear girl!"

he said. "She did her best, and that scoundrel fooled her completely. Oh, oh, oh!" And he squeezed his head with his hands as if to shut out the thought of his position and the inevitable consequences that he must face.

A little knot of loungers had gathered, his evident pain exciting their sympathy. This recalled him to himself, and he took a cab and drove away. Little knots of men stood in front of all the cafés, excitedly discussing the new tax. Half of them were clean shaven for the first time in their lives and the rest were about to be. There was a run on every hairdresser's shop in Naples. The Italian is poor, the taxes are killing, and the art of dodging them is the first thing taught to children. Vincent still held the paper and now read its comments on the tax. They combined a scream of sarcastic laughter with a howl of furious rage. Italy had been touched on the spot that was tenderest. But — and here was a gleam of hope — the reputation of the *Thunderer* was so high that the despatch had been taken seriously. The "sell" had not yet been exposed. If only Crespo would save him — but no! Crespo's position, already imperiled by a crisis, was worse than his own. Crespo would want to shoot him on the spot.

He caught the 2.40 train and rode to Rome in a state of numbness. What he would do to Halladay he did not dare to think. He was a man in a rage, a hungry, thirsty rage, that threatened to overpower him. Nor did he dare to go to his apartment. There lay the telegram dismissing him in derision and contempt. In his sorrow his heart turned to love for consolation. Arrived at Rome, he drove to the hotel, entered Miss Belmayne's drawing-room with a white, sad face, and sat in the shadow.

The Acting Correspondent came in radiant, beaming with pride and pleasure over her shrewdness and success.

"Have you seen it? It's in the Roman papers. You didn't get beaten. Oh, I was *so* worried and *so* happy when I knew you were safe!"

She stopped, mystified at his silence. Then she saw his pallor and his expression.

"Are you ill? What is it? What's the matter?"

He tried to spare her; tried to pass the matter over lightly. But the moment she knew that the despatch had caused his

trouble all subterfuges were useless. Her face, too, grew white, and she kept on asking him question after question, till she fully understood the effect of what she had done. His ruin was certain, but his replies were gentle, quiet, and full of sympathy. Then the society girl known as Miss Belmayne disappeared and the woman in her came out. His career was ended and through his love for her. His big, beautiful girl stood up, tried to say she was sorry, but couldn't. Her lips only quivered and wouldn't work. Then she sat down, bolt upright, on the sofa, and the tears came first creeping and then tumbling down from her eyelashes as she cried, broken hearted, without a word or a handkerchief. He tried to soothe her, to say it was nothing. "O Edward!" was all she said.

In spite of his grief he observed the word "Edward."

Upon this interesting and unconventional and social tableau bustled in Papa Belmayne, of Chicago, millionaire and newspaper correspondent. He saw a white young man and a young person bathed in tears.

"Wha — what's the matter?" said he, starting and peering over his eyeglasses.

"I'm done for, but it's all my own fault," said the young man.

Papa inquired and was told. He sat down suddenly in a state of collapse.

"If that sneak comes here again, I'll cowhide him," he said, exploding. "I'll thrash him anyhow. Anyhow!" he roared with the rage of an honest man who has been beaten at his own game.

Then several minutes of sad, solemn silence ensued, each trying to find a ray of light in the gloom.

"Why don't you see Crespo? He's a friend of yours, isn't he?" said Belmayne.

"He has been."

"Then come on. Laura, you come with us. We did it. We're responsible, and we'll take the blame. Crespo is the only man that can save you. Here! Order me a carriage!" he shouted to the maid.

The combative financier who had faced and won a hundred battles that were real battles was not to be daunted by a prime

minister and a newspaper and a little thing like this. His courage, of course, infected his daughter. With father at the helm everything would, of course, be all right. It must be all right. So she hoped once more and darted away for hat pins. While waiting for her and the hat pins at the elevator another thing occurred. Belmayne put his hand in a friendly way on Vincent's shoulder and said: "Young man, don't you worry. If you have to give up journalism, you may possibly do much better than that. I know you and I like you." Vincent nodded quietly. The implied promise was well meant, but it did not appeal to him just then. They drove to the Quirinal Hill in silence. The Acting Correspondent merely asked her father if her hat was on straight. She secretly proposed to take the prime minister by storm.

Now during all these woful occurrences Chance, which, as everybody knows, is the prime minister of Providence, was playing tricks upon another prime minister, the temporary ruler of Italy. Signor Crespo was at his wits' end over the new tax measures. In order to pass them he had to yield to the demands of the Socialist-Anarchist wing of his party, and if he failed to pass them he fell from power. One alternative was as distasteful as the other, and he was rapidly growing gray in his efforts to find a way out of the dilemma. When the *Thunderer* despatch was brought him he jumped to his feet in amazement. Then he scratched his head and said "Ah!" Then he smiled a smile of joy. He foresaw something.

Two minutes afterwards the double doors of his private room were burst open and a portly marquis, one of his enemies in the Cabinet, rushed in and said: "Crespo — for Heaven's sake —"

The prime minister said nothing.

Other high politicians of his party, rivals, and enemies, rushed in and cried: "Crespo — for Heaven's sake —"

Signor Crespo said nothing.

The King sent a noble duke hot-footed to say: "Crespo — for Heaven's sake —"

The prime minister still said nothing, but in different words.

In half an hour they were all on their knees, all the opposing elements he had spent months in trying to combine. They accepted the tax on moustaches as a fact, and saw that, in revenge

on them, he was going to ruin the party. They begged him not to propose it. He consented — on conditions. They agreed abjectly to his terms, told him to count on their votes, and, when the Chamber met, passed his Budget, which they had previously agreed to defeat, by a huge majority.

This is why the prime minister, who had made inquiries, was also eager to see the Acting Correspondent who had sent that despatch. Being a devout man, however, he looked upon the real sender as Providence.

The carriage party entered the Ministry. To Vincent it seemed to be wrapped in accusing gloom. It was his farewell to the prime minister, both as friend and correspondent. Nevertheless, he wrote on his card: "With Mr. and Miss Belmayne to explain that despatch."

They were silently ushered in and stood in the great man's presence, three drooping figures, guilty and downcast. Belmayne was not happy. He was not used to cringing before anybody. Laura's eyes were full of new tears. She would sway no more nations, whatever the temptation. Vincent was pale and grave.

For some reason the prime minister began to laugh. He had not felt like laughing for three months, and he enjoyed the feeling. He laughed till the tears came into his eyes.

Vincent was angry.

"Does it strike you as comical?" said he.

"Comical! It's providential. See here," said Signor Crespo, pointing to a pile of at least a hundred telegrams. "All Europe wants information about your despatch. I mean Miss Belmayne's despatch," he said, bowing gracefully.

"Then you — you understand how it happened?"

"Yes."

"And of course you — you've exposed it?"

"Oh, no. They thought I meant it. It has saved the situation."

"What?" said Vincent, thunderstruck.

"And in return, my friend, I have saved you. The *Thunderer* unable to get an answer from you, telegraphed me for indorsement. I sent this:—

"The *Thunderer*, London.

"In consequence of concessions from opposing elements, I shall not present my proposed tax on moustaches.

"CRESPO."

"BY JOVE!" said Vincent.

"EDWARD!" screamed somebody.

"Hurrah!" said Belmayne.

And Edward's arms were filled with sudden millinery, and two hearts were filled with deepest joy.

Two events of different kinds succeeded.

Halladay was abused by the *National* for missing the most important news of the year. When he gave a true explanation of the matter he was scoffed at. It was visibly false. He then proceeded to turn to a pale but not unbecoming green color. The doctors said liver; the cause was unrequited love.

The other event was a social function of a happy, even hilarious, character, at the Grand Hotel. This is not of importance, however, in a country where orange blossoms are indigenous.

Hand to Mouth Hints for those who thirst for the Milk of Human Kindness, and Heart to Heart Talks that will lead them from the Wrong Road into the Right Path.

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It is my turn to give the next tea party for our charity circle. I should like to do something very unique. Can you offer any suggestions? YOUNG HOSTESS.

Take an ordinary hot water bottle and attach to it a rubber tube of say eight feet in length. Place the bottle under the table in front of your chair and carelessly throw over it a small rug. Carry the tube under the cloth to the centre of the table. Bring it through a bottomless vase filled with tea roses and placed over a small hole in the cloth. Just before your guests sit down fill the hot water bottle with tea. When serving press gently on the bottle with your foot, being careful to hold the tea cup under the end of the tube which is concealed among the roses. If you wish to transform this unique tea service into a Fairyland fountain, substitute water scented with cologne, musk, or other perfume, and attach the nozzle of a sprinkling can to the upper end of the rubber tube, which, as stated, is hidden among the flowers. Borrow the tea roses from your picture hat if you haven't real ones.

Can any birds other than chickens be hatched from ordinary hens' eggs? If so, how? ROBIN.

Yes. By mixing sawdust with their corn meal each hen will reward you with a brood of woodpeckers. You can also produce nuthatches by feeding chestnuts.

I have a prize pony whose only fault is that some days he has balking fits and makes me walk home. Can you advise me? PAULINE.

Carefully read "Every Man His Own Horse Doctor," then take the pony to town on one of the days when he hasn't a fit and sell him to a stranger.

Kindly quote an appropriate salt water toast and give me the name of the author. MERMAID.

1. 'Tis better to have luffed and lost
   Than never to have luffed at all.
2. Sir Thomas Lipton.

What shall a young man do who, at a luncheon, suddenly discovers a thimble in his bouillon? HAROLD.

In the best society the guest would not be required to complete the soup course, but it would be bad form to in any way call attention to his find. Upon leaving the table, however, he should seek out his hostess and explain that the thimble does not belong to him.

While attending a fashionable reception I saw a stranger kiss my betrothed three times on the elevator. What was the correct thing for me to do? JULIUS.

In fashionable society it is not considered good form for a stranger to kiss a young lady on the elevator even if she be betrothed. As etiquette forbids one speaking to a stranger, the correct thing for you to do was to procure an introduction and ascertain if the kissing was accidental. If otherwise, that settles it!

I am to give a simple little luncheon to a few members of our bird lovers' league. Can you suggest an appropriate dish and tell me how to prepare it? NIGHTINGALE.

Why not try Cuckoo Tamales? They make both a simple and a stylish dish. Select six medium sized, sound potatoes. Wash thoroughly and place in a colander. Next gather seven fresh grape leaves and place face down on a platter. Carefully apply a thin coating of lard, on which spread a liberal layer of tapioca garnished with small dabs of mustard. Cover with bread crumbs, decorate with tiny gobs of peanut butter and leave in a cool place for three hours. Then add a frost of melted chocolate and place in the centre of each portion a tiny nest of minced parsley containing two lima beans which may be hand painted to represent birds' eggs. Now with deft fingers quickly roll the tamales and tie each in the middle and at the ends with a fresh grape tendril, being careful to leave the little curlycues intact. The potatoes may be boiled or baked the next day and served as a left-over.

> When walking with a young man and one's garter breaks what should a girl do? ANXIOUS.
>
> Merely say that a small accident has happened to your stocking (since its supporter has failed it), and that you must go into the nearest shop for a moment and ask permission to repair damages. —*Ladies' Home Journal.*

The above might have proved of benefit to me were I a city girl, but I live in the country and when it happened the nearest shop was that of a blacksmith fully a mile distant. What is the proper thing to do? MORE ANXIOUS.

Suppose your pet dog breaks his chain! Do you say to your escort that an accident has happened to Fido? Hardly! You simply tell him the chain broke! In other words your garter is off its trolley! Next, why should *you* wish to go into a shop? There are moments when one wants to be alone and this is one of them. The proper thing to do is to tell the young man that *he* must go to the nearest shop. While there, securing from the blacksmith Helpful Hints on horseshoeing, you repair damages in a secluded nook by the roadside. In refined society, by the way, ladies never venture out nowadays without an emergency garter or two, just as touring cars provide themselves with extra tires.

What garb expresses most becomingly the grief of a young wife freshly bereaved, and how can a clever young widow make one at home? ISOBELLE.

1. The Merry Widow Hat.

2. To the top of a left-over man's Derby glue a medium sized bath sponge. Into this insert upright near the front three pampas grass plumes eighteen inches long and fasten securely with safety pins. After dyeing with lampblack place around the crown a band of mourning ribbon caught into a smart bow at the back and leave ends two and three feet long. Now cover the brim with black crepe neatly quilted and cut saw-toothed. A festoon of weeping pussy willows worn at the throat completes this novel yet inexpensive creation, which, by the way, is easily converted into an Oriole Opera Toque by dipping the pampas plumes into liquid gold bronze and instead of wearing these rampant closely snuggling them around the sponge after the